

# Queensland mining accidents

## Info Guide 3.28

Mining was a major occupational activity in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Accidents in which miners were involved provide a path to track the movements and activities of miners.

Queensland mining accidents were published annually in the *Queensland Legislative Assembly Votes and Proceedings* (later known as *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*) from 1882 to 1945.

**An index to miners involved in Queensland mining accidents from 1882 to 1900** can be searched via the State Library of Queensland's website at <http://fhr.slq.qld.gov.au/minacc> (An index to mining accidents for the period 1901-1938 is under development.)

### Example

Name	Date	District	Name Of Mine	Remarks	Source
Gambie, Amos	21 Mar 1900	Maryborough	Torbanlea	Killed. An explosion of gas occurred on the date given by which these five men were seriously burnt. All were taken to the hospital at Maryborough alive, but one by one they succumbed to the injuries which they had received. (Burnt)	1901/4/464

Each entry records the date of the accident, the name of the mine where the accident took place and a remarks column which briefly details the accidents. The source column refers to the year, volume and page number in the *Queensland Legislative Assembly Votes and Proceedings* (e.g. 1901/4/464 is 1901, volume 4, page 464). The *Queensland Legislative Assembly Votes and Proceedings* (*Queensland Parliamentary Papers*) is available on microfilm (MFL 328.943) at the State Library's South Bank building on level 3.

### Further information in the Queensland Parliamentary Papers

Occasionally additional information can be gleaned from reading the mining wardens' reports which are published in the Queensland Parliamentary Papers. The reports are usually listed alphabetically by mining district. The quality of reports will vary depending of the writer. Usually only the most serious accidents are listed.

#### **Example of the mining warden's report for Hodgkinson Field – Queensland Parliamentary Papers 1901, volume 4, p.406**

*"During the year two accidents were reported; one, I am sorry to say, was fatal, which occurred in General Grant Mine, to Lawrence Henry Kirby. I held an inquiry into the cause of death, and it appears by the evidence that deceased and his mate, Shaw, who were engaged sinking the General Grant shaft, gave the usual signal to the engine-driver to haul up. When the bucket arrived opposite the No.2 level, while the engine was in motion, they both attempted to leave the bucket. Shaw managed to get into the level, but the deceased fell a distance of over 50 feet.*

*The other accident occurred in the Vulcan Extended Claim to a miner named Thomas Porter. It appears that his mate was lowering him down with the windlass, and, when he was within 25 feet of the bottom, the rope broke, and Porter fell. In falling he received a nasty wound in the head, but the doctor does not consider that it is serious."*

## Newspapers

Newspapers often reported on serious or fatal mining accidents and can provide further background details on the incident and personal information on the injured or deceased miner. With fatal accidents funeral notices and obituaries may also have been published in the local newspaper. See also *Info Guide 3.9 – Newspapers and family history*.

Example taken from the *Bundaberg & Mount Perry Mail*, 4 March 1889, p.2

MUCH regret was experienced in Mount Perry last week by the untimely demise of M. Fleiner, who was killed through falling down a shaft at Reid's Creek. Deceased was a long-time resident of Mount Perry and a son of Mr. L. Fleiner of Bundaberg. He was generally respected as a conscientious and painstaking miner. In the course of his address yesterday morning in St. Mary's the Rev. C. Rossolini made some affectionate allusions to deceased and bespoke sympathy for the bereaved parents.

To locate a newspaper for a particular area:

- search the OneSearch online catalogue <http://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/>,
- consult the two listings available in the Reading Room: *Newspapers by place* and *Newspapers by title*,
- or check online newspaper archives such as *Historic Australian Newspapers*, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper>

## Inquests

Most fatal accidents required a magisterial enquiry (or inquest) to interview relevant witnesses and establish the cause of death. Inquest files are held with the Queensland State Archives.

- *QSA brief guide no. 12 – Inquest Records* - <http://www.archives.qld.gov.au/downloads/BriefGuides/BG12Inquest.pdf>
- *Index to inquests 1859-1886* - <http://www.archives.qld.gov.au/research/index/inquests.asp>

Alternatively many local newspapers closely followed and reported the daily proceedings of magisterial enquiries.

## Need further information?

State Library of Queensland, Queensland Cultural Centre, Stanley Place, South Bank.

Reference Services: t. +61 7 3840 7810, w. [www.slq.qld.gov.au/enquiry](http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/enquiry)

Visit [www.slq.qld.gov.au/about/pub/info\\_guides/collections/fh](http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/about/pub/info_guides/collections/fh) to access all family history Info Guides.